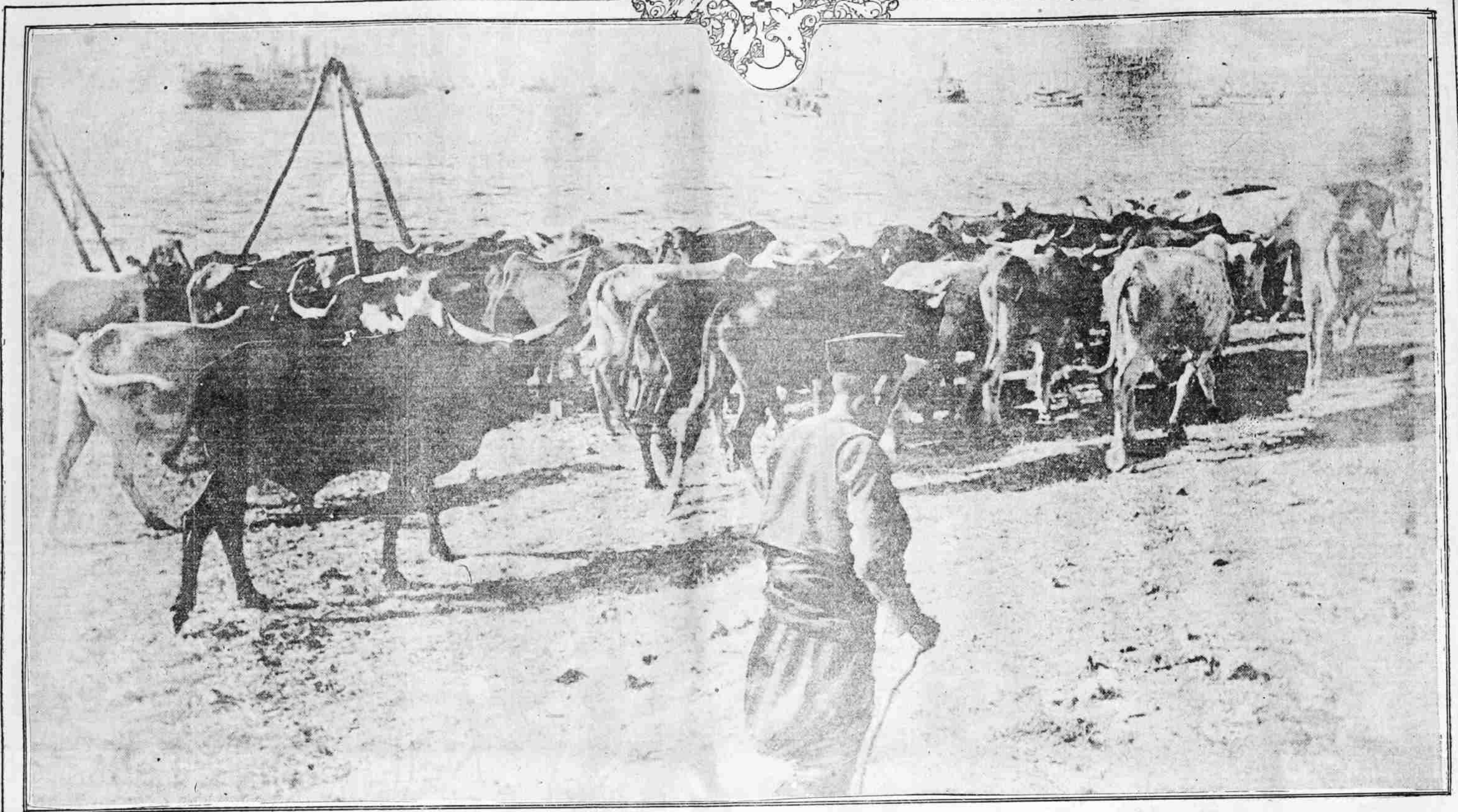


Magazine Feature Section

FORAGING FOR THE FLEET



British Sailors Find Food for Blockaders in Great Herds of Cattle that Are Seized Around Saloniki Despite Greeks' Protest.

THE business of foraging for food in war time is ordinarily supposed to be part of a soldier's work, to be the necessary duties of land forces advancing into a new country, and obliged, because of the difficulties of obtaining provisions, to help themselves to the provender of the country in which they are operating. But to think of naval forces as engaged in the same sort of work is not only highly unusual, but rarely ever done.

This curious anomaly, however, has come out of the present great war. The British fleet which has been blockading the Aegean waters has done just this very thing. Far from its bases, the fleet has been obliged to live off the country. And the Greeks, neutrals, are suffering for it.

Around Saloniki cattle raising is one of the extensive occupations of the Greek land owners. And it has been upon these cattle that the sailors of the fleet have been living for some time past. Foraging expeditions have been going ashore, and, coming upon a herd of likely-looking cattle, compelling the owner to drive them to the coast, where they are slaughtered and taken aboard the ships, to be quartered and eaten in the ships' mess. As for payment for the cattle—well, that may come later, and again it may not.

Quite natural it is that the natives should resent such usurpation as another of the entente allies' offensive acts to Greek neutrality. The Government of Greece, however, is not in a position to oppose these acts with sufficient force to gain anything by armed measures. But the people are not so calm. They, individually, have made the work of the foraging expeditions not only unpleasant, but extremely hazardous.

The resentment of the Greeks has been growing with each new herd of cattle seized. The sailors have been encountering a more determined opposition, and, in fact, have, in some cases, returned, not only without cattle, but without one or two members of the party.

The country is just the kind to afford the native ample opportunity to imperil the foragers and to make their incursions fraught with potential danger. Many accounts of the resistance of the natives have been told, but the experience of Robert Alexander Carter of the

royal navy is probably as close a call as any single-handed fighter in the foraging expedition has had. Attacked treacherously in the night by the man whose roof was sheltering him, he escaped death only by the quickness of his hand and mind, and returned to his friends with his arm hopelessly shattered.

The foraging expeditions had twice gone ashore, and each time had found no cattle. The natives were bland, very bland. They did not know where there were any cattle, the English had taken them all, the Greeks explained. But the sailors were not to be deceived by the subtleties of the land folk. In the obviously feigned ignorance of the natives the British caught the hidden challenge. How to take up that challenge was a problem of some difficulty.

Carter was selected for the effort. A young fellow, only 29 years of age, he had a various experience in life. He was a good shot, a good fencer, could ride well and was generally the type of man, a sort of cosmopolitan, upon whom dependence could be placed for such an enterprise.

Carter left Saloniki and started for the army by a route which had not been before traveled by the British forces. It was a longer route and not so easy to use. This course would bring Carter through a new country and give him ample opportunity to survey a section of Northern Greece heretofore unfamiliar to the British. If any cattle were there, certainly they would have been driven into this unfrequented section of the country to secure them against English foraging.

He rode for two days on his reconnoitering expedition, without seeing any of the signs that he had been sent to find. An occasional peasant's home along the way and a few of the manifestations he found that the country was inhabited.

The first night he ate and slept with one of the natives. The people of the country seemed not so bitter against the army as they were towards the men of the navy. The army had been supplied largely with the things it needed, and besides was so far away that it could hardly affect the people along Carter's journey. With the navy it was different. Time and again the sailors had come a day or two days' distance and scoured the land of its cattle.

Carter's second night was passed in the same manner that the first one had. Continuing on his way the third morning, he saw what seemed to him from the distance he was riding to be a herd of cattle. They were off far from the road, and he was obliged to cut into the country in order to get near enough to do the work of his mission.

It was shortly past noon before he finally came upon the cattle. He made a few notes of the route he took across country, and was estimating the number of the herd when he suddenly became aware that he was being watched by two of the natives. Feigning indifference, he started off on a long trot for the road he had left some time before.

The Greeks, however, detoured behind a small hill, and, when he had almost attained the road again, presented themselves before him. There were only two of them, apparently father and son, as the lieutenant judged from the differences in their ages. The son, for so he later



"Carter sprang at the Greek."

learned the relation of the two, was a sullen youth of about twenty-five years, well armed and the picture of desperate hostility. Quite the opposite was the older man. Armed, too, he nevertheless possessed a crafty air that was all friendliness, and, Carter noted, exceptionally cunning.

The Englishman nodded to the two in a friendly tone as he could, and, to his surprise, the older of the two men answered in rather good English. Carter told the father of his assumed mission, explaining his presence in the field with the casual statement that he had taken what seemed to him a short course.

The man was very friendly, offering to show him a way by which he could save many

not overcome his hidden, almost premonition, feeling that the old fellow was only covering his cunning with apparent warmth for the English. Consequently, the sailor remained on guard, although the two hours' ride almost served to remove his fears.

Toward sunset the party drew near a secluded little cottage among the rocks and trees. They dismounted, the boy led the horses around to the rear, and to the old woman at the door the Greek spoke in his native tongue, and soon she was bustling over the evening meal with an eagerness which further disarmed Carter's suspicions. The three ate the meal, Carter and the lord of the household carrying on a conversation about the war and America, while the son and the mother talked earnestly, and, much to Carter's uneasiness, in the language, which was, of course, utterly unintelligible to the Englishman. Occasionally the father would be addressed and he would reply shortly and go on with his talk with Carter.

There were only three rooms in the cottage, two besides the room in which the eating and cooking was done. One of the rooms was used by the parents, the other by the son. Carter was given the son's room.

Upon preparing for the night, as a precaution, Carter, when alone, changed the bed to the other side of the room and placed the rude chair before the room's only door, so that anyone entering would, if unaware that the chair was there, stumble over it and awaken the sleeper. Carter placed his revolver handy and dropped off to sleep in his uniform. The bed could hardly be dignified by the term. It was only a great bag, filled with straw and dropped down on the floor. However, it was not Carter's first experience with sleeping quarters unlike those of his Sussex home.

The serenity of night soon settled down; the nearly spent moon of late in the month arose after midnight. Carter slept on. The door of the room opened slowly, cautiously. Two figures entered the sleeping man's chamber, approaching foot by foot—inches by inch. Suddenly the first one pushed against the chair, which fell over with a crash. Silence ensued, but the noise had served its purpose.

For a minute Carter lay awake without moving or making a sound. Neither did any sound come from the other two beings, whom Carter knew to be crouched behind the overturned chair. Then the lieutenant again sensed the movements of the two figures. Slowly they crept over the floor where the son's bed should be. The room was almost dark. Except for a little shaft of moonlight, it would have been absolutely so. From the far side of the room Carter could just discern the two crouching figures.

Suddenly the two intruders gave a lunge at the place where Carter should have been sleeping and planned their knives deep into the floor as they had intended to plant them in the sleeping man.

From the floor across the room, Carter's revolver flashed out twice. There was a scream and a heavy body fell against the now entirely alert Englishman. But with the body's fall the gun had been knocked from Carter's hand. In the dark he knew it would be impossible to recover his weapon. He must rely then on the long knife he carried.

Somewhere in the room he knew there was another man, a mortal enemy, also armed with a knife. Neither could make out the form of the other. Both crouched, waiting to spring. Then the idea came to Carter which saved his life. He knew he was near the overturned chair. Reaching around cautiously, he found it, and, seizing it, he threw it into the light which penetrated faintly through the window.

Quick as a flash the Greek started, and, al-

though it was too late, tried to drop back again out of the faint ray. Carter had found him and sprang unerringly upon him.

The two men in a death struggle. Before Carter could catch the knife arm of his assailant, the Greek had inflicted a gash the length of Carter's arm. They closed together, each with a grip upon the other's knife, each fighting to free his arm that he might strike with his own knife. Back and forth they swayed before the window and its little streak of light. For what seemed an interminable length of time they held one another, each impotent to harm his opponent.

Carter realized the futility of such an exhausting and desperate struggle. He saw that a quick termination must come if he ever expected to escape. The women he supposed had gone to summon others of the tribe at the sound of the shots. In this he was right. Even then the kinsmen of his enemy were coming.

Carter had been accredited as the best wrestler of his class at the naval training school, and it suddenly occurred to him to utilize some of his tricks in the terrible combat he was engaged in. Without loosening his hold on his opponent—and without freeing himself from the grasp of the Greek—he slid out his foot until he had it in the precise position. A sudden push and the native lost his balance. The moment he relaxed Carter was free, and through the window to the open field.

He ran immediately for the horses, but just as he was about to spring into the saddle of his mount he heard the galloping tribesmen coming out of the distance. To leap on the horse and try to ride away would have been fatal. Besides, Carter knew he was not well enough acquainted with the land for that. And to wait there would have been equally hazardous.

Leading out his horse, he lashed the animal unmercifully until it leaped away at a gallop. Dropping behind a bush, he saw the man he had been grappling with emerge from the window, knife in hand. Upon hearing the beat of Carter's horse, the Greek leaped upon his own, and, with a shout to the approaching horsemen, started in hot pursuit.

The others galloped up and on after the young Greek and his supposed quarry. Carter did not know that one of them had dismounted and gone into the house. From his seclusion it was too far to observe that. When the stamping of the galloping horses had receded into the distance Carter ventured forth. There was still left one horse, he thought. His own he had driven away. The young Greek had followed the riderless horse upon his own animal. And the father's mount should still remain. This horse Carter found, but he was troubled to note that another was there, too.

Dismissing the worry engendered by the new discovery, he mounted his victim's wiry little animal and turned full speed in the direction of the encamped army—opposite the way in which the pursuit had gone after his lone horse. Then it was that he learned what the extra horse meant, for in a moment he heard the pursuing beat of the other mount, the horse which belonged to the Greek who had dismounted and entered the house.

However, Carter's danger was not ended. When the Greek saw he was being outdistanced he began to fire after the fleeing shadow. With a coincidence stranger than fiction one of the half dozen shots took effect—in the neck which had been slashed by the Greek's knife. Dizzy and weak, Carter continued. Scorned broke, and Carter still pushed on over the Macedonian plains. An hour later an outpost of the army stopped a deadening horse with an unconscious man clinging over the animal's neck.